

Children, Youth & Family Consortium

CYFC Monthly

CYFC Monthly – February 2013

What is Policy Education and Why is it Important?

As we begin each legislative session, it is timely to think about CYFC's philosophy on engaging those in the state policymaking world. Our non-advocacy, non-partisan approach is based on policy education, a concept born out of Extension.

In the policy education model, policy educators intend for research evidence to be considered in ways that transform how policymakers think, such that it is then integrated into everyday policymaking. In this model, policymakers are seen as the adult learner that they are, with the policy educator providing options that inform their policy decisions. When policy educators view policymakers as learners rather than as just representatives of a certain party, for example, they are forced to focus on and attend to policymakers' differences in learning styles and preferences, which vary from adult learner to adult learner. Rather than attempting to sway a policymaker toward a particular decision, policy educators try to be objective instructors that:

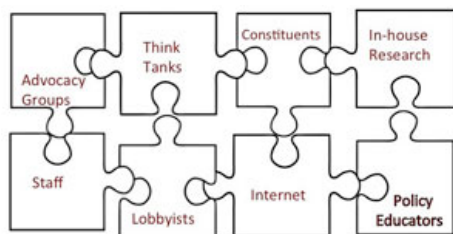
- Attend and respond to individual learner needs and interests (like preferring visuals over print)
- Provide a range of opportunities for learning (like seminars, one-on-one interactions, briefing reports, presentations, etc.)
- Pay attention to the larger context in which the information exchange takes place (such as the highly charged political arena)
- Inform the learner about multiple options for addressing an issue
- Are open to any outcome of this process (i.e., they are not tied to any particular bill being passed)
- Able to put aside personal desires and political beliefs for the benefit of the learner

So why is this approach significant?

As a publicly funded land grant institution that addresses public issues through teaching, research and outreach, the policy education model fits the type of work that CYFC undertakes as it carries out Extension's mission of making University research and knowledge practical and useful to the people of Minnesota. CYFC has done this through local and national policy education efforts such as Wonder Years, and the University-Based Child and Family Policy Consortium.

When policymakers are addressing a problem, they are often doing so at the request of or to further explore concerns expressed by their constituents. Their job as public servants is to make thoughtful and informed policy decisions on behalf of their constituency. But busy policymakers have much to consider as they make those decisions. In addition to hearing frequently from constituents, they also hear from advocates and lobbyists (who campaign for a specific group or a particular policy alternative and seek to influence policy

action), legislative and agency staff, researchers, representatives from partisan and nonpartisan organizations, other legislators and many, many others as they weigh their policy options.



Policymakers want and need to hear from all of these sources as they make the tough decisions that they are elected to make. Policy educators' aim is simply to help research be included as one of the many pieces of the complicated policymaking puzzle, and to make that research understandable and accessible for all policymakers.

By being responsive to the learning needs of those on both sides of the aisle, it lets policymakers know that CYFC takes its land grant mission seriously, and that we will respond to their children, youth and family-related research needs over the long haul.

Sara Benning, M.L.S.

Policy Lead

Consortium News

Lessons from the Field — Homeless Children and Youth: Opening the Doors of Intervention and Policy Registration is now open!

Date: April 5, 2013

Location: University of Minnesota McNamara Alumni Center and broadcast live via web stream and ITV

Cost: \$60 Metro, \$25 Web Stream, \$20 Student

Discount available until March 5. Use code: LFTFMPLS for \$15 discount in Metro and LFTFGRMN for \$5 discount for Web Stream

This seminar features intermediate content and a team of professionals who will discuss causes, as well as intervention and prevention strategies that address the growing number of homeless children and adolescents in Minnesota. An intervention program that members of the presentation team designed for Ramsey County will provide one model for discussion. Presenters include: Laurel Edinburgh, Midwest Children's Resource Center, Beth Holger-Ambrose, Homeless Youth Services Coordinator, Minnesota DHS and Emily Huemann, Supervisor, Sexual Offenses Services (SOS), Ramsey County. [Register now!](#)

What others are saying about LFTF:

- A social worker from Albert Lea — "Lessons from the Field provide clear, educated, and articulate speakers with practical information"
- A teacher — "I appreciated the excellent presentations as well as the opportunity to dialogue with colleagues."
- A youth worker from Brainerd — "I appreciate having quality speakers available to our community without a 6-hour drive to the Twin Cities — incredible. Thanks for bringing a broad view of important topics into perspective for us in Greater Minnesota."
- A professional from Mt. Iron — "I wish more people from my area came to these seminars."

Pull Scholarship from your Community Engagement Work

Cathy Jordan offers four steps to increasing impact on communities and enhancing career success when working with communities to improve youth outcomes. Cathy is serving as [guest blogger](#) for University of Minnesota Extension Youth Development discussing how to make greater impact through community engaged work.

CYFC Collaboration Highlight: W.T. Grant Officer's Award to Fund Research-Policy Network

CYFC is an active member of the [University-Based Child and Family Policy Consortium](#) (CFPC), which includes over 30 university-based child and family policy centers, intermediaries, institutes, programs, and departments that represent the social, behavioral, and health sciences. CFPC center member Chapin Hall (University of Chicago) - in collaboration with CYFC and Duke's Center for Child and Family Policy — has received a \$25,000 award from the [W. T. Grant Foundation](#) for the creation of the University-Based Child and Family Policy Consortium's Child Welfare Learning Community Network.

With the intent to expanding the Foundation's learning community model, CFPC member entities and selected policymaker partners from Illinois, North Carolina, Minnesota and a fourth state will co-develop a network of researchers and policymakers whose work will support W.T. Grant's efforts at improving the connections between research and practice. Together, the network will review and document current research-policy collaborative models focused on youth in child welfare, identifying best practices that will help the network understand how to increase and enhance researcher-policymaker transactions around child welfare. This award provides one year of funding.

[Sara Benning](#) serves as the associate director of the CFPC and a co-investigator on this project.

University and Community Announcements

Assets and Wellness: A Positive Approach to Health

Minnesota Campus Compact and University of Minnesota's Office for Public Engagement

Date: March 8, 2013

Time: 10:00 a.m. -3:30 p.m.

Location: University of Minnesota Urban Research and Outreach Center
2001 Plymouth Avenue North, Minneapolis, MN 55411

Learn to recognize and build on the assets and strengths of communities rather than deficits and gaps to see greater improvements in the health and well-being of all individuals. Keynote speaker Tony Looking Elk will address asset-based health initiatives. Other speakers will discuss curriculum development, research methods and issue-specific projects. See [Assets and Wellness](#) for more information and registration.

First 40 Gala

Minnesota 4-H Foundation

Date: March 2, 2013

Time: 7:00 -10:00 p.m.

Location: University of Minnesota St. Paul Student Center — Northstar Ballroom

Cost: \$40

Join the Minnesota 4-H Foundation for the First 40 Gala to support Minnesota 4-H State Arts-In program and make technology improvements. A silent auction, special activities and special performances will be featured throughout the evening. Please register by Monday, February 25, 2013. More information is available at 612-624-7974 and fdnstaff@umn.edu.

Picky Eaters vs. Problem Feeders: Reasons, Strategies and Resources for Moving Forward

Robin Campbell on Mom Enough

Occupational Therapist Robin Campbell spoke with hosts Marti Erickson and Erin Erickson from [Mom Enough](#) about how to take the stress out of mealtime, identify underlying reasons for your child's food

challenges and how to know when to seek professional help.

Nature Heals: People, Plants, Animals and the (Re)-connection to health

Minnesota Landscape Arboretum's Nature Based Therapeutic Services (NBT)

Dates: Thursday March 14 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. and March 15 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Location: MacMillian Auditorium, Oswald Visitor Center, Minnesota Landscape Arboretum

Cost: \$85 early bird (by Feb. 15), members of the Arboretum and the Center for Spirituality & Healing; \$95 general registration

[Nature Heals](#) addresses the neuroscience of human bonds with nature: plant and animal interaction and the way that connecting with nature increases health and community well-being. Participants will receive new, research-based information to inform programming, policy-making, and fundraising. Eva Sehumb, author of *Your Brain on Nature* and Meg Olmert, author of *Made for Each Other* will discuss their journeys to understand the health impact of nature on humans.

Leadership Matters Online

University of Minnesota Extension Youth Work Institute

Date: Open February 5 - March 5 (3 live webinars Feb 12, Feb 19 and Feb 26 2013 from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.)

Location: Online

Cost: \$100

This online course offers an in-depth exploration into the key issues in supervision and leadership of youth work organizations. Through both synchronized group time and individual self-paced learning, attendees will receive tools to engage staff and foster leadership, recognition of Strengths Based philosophy and Core Competencies for Youth Work, and practice with reflective learning techniques in a professional learning circle.

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